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ABSTRACT

A brief history of Afro-Hispanics in the United States and a more detailed discussion of the Black Cuban population among the recent Mariel Harbor immigrants are provided in this paper. The U.S. Cuban population is contrasted with other Hispanic groups in terms of the former's higher eductional and economic level, but changes resulting in the general profile of Cuban Americans due to the Mariel arrivals are described. Specifically, it is noted that these recent immigrants are, overwhelmingly, unskilled, single males, most of whom are black or mulatto. Racial attitudes and bias among Cubans are dicussed, and evidence of institutional discrimination on the island, both before and after the revolution, is cited. Some preliminary data on employment and social adjustment of the Mariel arrivals who relocated in New York are offered, and further adjustment problems for black Cubans are predicted. Reference is made to a large number of other publications written on this subject. (GC)

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE BLACK CUBANS AMONG THE MARIEL ENTRANTS

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I. Hispanics in the United States

Convential wisdom has it that some time during the 1980's Hispanics will become the largest ethnic group in the United States, surpassing blacks in the process. The 1980 census estimated that there were some 14.6 million persons of Hispanic origin on the United States mainland plus an additional 3.2 million people in Puerto Rico. In 1970, Hispanics constituted 4.5% of the total United States mainland population, by 1980 their relative percentage had increased to 6.5%.[1]

Mexican-Americans (Chicanos) constitute a majority (60%) of the Hispanics on the mainland. Fourteen percent are Puerto Ricans, 6% are Cuban-Americans, 8% are Central and South Americans, and 12% are "other Spanish". Other Spanish may include persons of mixed Hispanic backgrounds.[2] Attention should be called to the fact that the definition of Hispanic is not always consistent among different data sources or even over time within the same data source.[3] In addition to Hispanics which stresses a common Spanish heritage there also other terms in popular use. "Latinos" which has greater appeal to some groups, e.g., Cuban-Americans. "Spanish-surname" is a more limited term in as much as many people of Hispanic origin may have non-Spanish-surname, e.g., O'Reilly, O'Farrill, Findlay, Stevenson, Wong, Hart, Yabur, Anckermann, Oltusky, etc. from Cuba. "Spanish-speaking" while more descriptive does not proper include some of the second and third generation Hispanics who may not even speak Spanish.[4] Racially, Hispanics are classified as white or black. The United States Bureau of the Census classified 90% of the Hispanics as white.[5] Obviously, this simplistic traditional white-black dichotomous racial classification scheme is hardly suited to the vast number of racial and ethnic groups and mixtures thereof which are common in Latin America.[6] There are three major broad racial groups which originally formed the basis of the Latin American countries,

i.e., white, black and Indian. To this mixture, peoples from Asia, Middle East, and Eastern Europe were added to further complicated the racial picture in Latin America. The list of racial classification in use in most Latin American countries tries to identify each racial groups and the successive mixtures of each.[7] Also it should be noted that the above figures may not satisfactorily count all Hispanics in the United States due to possible cases of undercounting. Certainly, by definition, the so-called "illegal" immigrants are excluded from the count.[8]

Geographically, Hispanics tend to cluster in a relatively small number of states. For example, approximately 90% of the Mexican-Americans live in the five southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Colorado. About 70% of the Puerto Ricans on the mainland reside in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. In the case of the Cuban-Americans, 60% live in Florida plus another 21% in New York and New Jersey. Sixty-six percent of the Central and South Americans live in New York and California.[9]

II. Afro-Hispanics in the United States

If 90% of the Hispanics are classified as white, then the remaining 10% must be considered black. Wilson refers to the black Hispanics as "los excluidos" (the excluded) who have a neglected and marginal existence in the United States.[10] Further complicating their situation, Afro-Hispanics may be viewed as minorities within minorities.[11] Are they racial minorities (blacks) within ethnic minorities (Hispanics)? Or, are they ethnic minorities (Hispanics) within racial minorities (blacks)? To be or not to be that is the question.[12]

Contrary to what is generally known, people of African ancestry have had contact with Hispanic culture since the year 711, when Tarik, a Moorish general, led the Islamic invasion of the Iberian peninsula culminating in the

defeat of the last Gothic king of Spain, Rodrigo.[13] This invasion was followed in 1086 by a second major invasion commanded by Jusuf who defeated Alfonso VI of Castile.[14] With the fall of Granada in 1492, the end came to the eight centuries of Moslem rule in Spain.[15]

Even after the fall of Moslem rule in Spain, contact between Africans and Spaniards continued. It is interesting to note that King Ferninand and Queen Isabella, the Catholic monarchs, appointed Juan de Valladolid, a ladino, i.e., Hispanicized African, as "Chief and Judge" over his people, i.e., blacks, in Seville, Spain.[16]

Afro-Hispanics also played a role in the Spanish Conquest of the Americas: Pedro Alonzo Niño, a crew member with Columbus; Nuflo de Olano, with Balboa's expedition to discover the Pacific Ocean; Juan Garrido and Juan Cortes, members of Cortes expedition to conquer Mexico; Estebanico, member of Narvaez's expedition to Florida; Juan Valiente, member of Valdivia's expedition to Chile.[17]

After the Spanish Conquest, the colonization of the Americans began in earnest. The Indians were enslaved to perform the backbreaking work in the mines, plantations, road construction, etc. In the tropical coastal lands, the Indians died and/or committed suicide under the yoke of slavery. Las Casas appealed to the Spanish Crown to relieve the sufferings of the Indians and proposed the importation of African slaves to take their places in the mines, plantations and construction gangs. After all, it was the conventional wisdom of the time that one African slave was worth ten Indians.

The African slaves never passively accepted their condition as slaves. From the early introduction of African slaves, the slave revolts, and threats of revolts, began. For instance, in 1522 the slaves on Diego Columbus' plantation in Espaniola revolted.[18] In Mexico City, a slave revolt was crushed in 1612.[19] During the entire slavery period, the slaves continued to jump the

plantation and to form their own communities called: palenques, quilombos, mocambos, cumbes, ladeiras o mambises.[20] These escaped slaves were known as "maroons" which comes from the Spanish "cimarron." Originally, cimarron was applied to the stray cattle who lived in the mountains. By extension, the term was used to refer to the "wild" Indians who lived in the hills. Finally, around 1530, the name came to signify the runaway black slaves.[21] Among the outstanding maroon chiefs one would have to cite: Bayano in Panama; Bankus in Colombia; Yonga in Mexico; Gonga Zumba in Brazil; Chirinos in Venezuela; Ventura Sanchez (Coba) in Cuba; and Cudjoe in Jamaica.[22, 23] An interesting case of maroon society was the two centuries struggle for freedom of the former slaves of El Cobre (copper) mines outside of Santiago, Cuba. From 1599 to 1799, the descendants of the original 59 slaves fought until the King of Spain agreed to grant them their freedom. Not only did the "cobreros" as they were called set a precedence for their freedom, but eventually provided an example for the freedom of the entire country from Spain.[24]

In addition to the descendants of the former African slaves, the ranks of Afro-Hispanics have been enlarged by the immigration of blocks from the English-speaking Caribbean, i.e., West Indians. West Indians were contracted to build the Panama Railroad from 1850 to 1855. The French's unsuccessful attempt to build the Panama Canal from 1880 to 1889 followed by the United States successful attempt from 1904 to 1914, attracted large number of West Indians into Panama. After the construction many remained where they are known as "chombos."[25] Of those who left Panama, some were attracted to the banana plantations of Central Americans, and other went to cut sugar cane in Cuba and Santo Domingo. In Cuba, they were known as "pichones" while in Santo Domingo they became "cocolos."

The first important record of Afro-Hispanics in the United States dates back to September 4, 1781 when Los Angeles was founded. A majority of the

founders of Los Angeles, were Afro-Mexicans who were from the Mexican state of Sinaloa where about a third of the population was of African ancestry.[26]

Since 1781, unknown numbers of Afro-Hispanics have entered the United States where they suffer from double invisibility. First, by being black, and second by foreign.[27] On a personal note, Bryce-Laporte (black Panamanian) admits that he suffers from "what may be termed the underside or psychological anxieties of the brain drain. These are feelings of alienation and ambivalence of identity, despite his relative success" as a notable scholar in the United States.[28] Wilson believes, that Afro-Hispanics may suffer from a third source of invisibility stemming from the Catholic religion to which many belong.[29] Clearly much more research and study is indicated to identify the Afro-Hispanics and to document their lives.

II. Cubans in the United States

Although Cuban-Americans generally share similar difficulties in the labor market with other Hispanics, e.g., the lack of English and education, and discrimination,[30] they tend to fare better than other Hispanics. Their labor market participation rate is high, unemployment is low, and median personal income is high relative to other Hispanic groups in the United States. On the other hand, the income position of Cuban-Americans is substantially below that of non-Hispanic whites. The data for Cuban-Americans do not include the approximately 125,000 Cubans who entered the United States via the Mariel boatlift, a majority of whom is generally believed to be jobless.[31]

The bulk of the Cuban immigration to the United States has taken place in the post-revolution period in Cuba (1959). In 1960, there were no more than 50,000 Cubans living in the United States.[32] These were the people from the previous smaller groups of Cubans who made their way to the United States.

Cubans, as a rule, were never given to immigrating. There was a previous wave of Cuban immigration around the latter part of the nineteenth century. At that time, there were some 100,000 Cubans living in the United States concentrated primarily in New York City, Tampa, Key West and other Florida cities. From 1868 to 1895, this group of Cubans, fleeing wars of independence, this first sizeable group of Cubans founded the cigar industry in South Florida and remained the first large community of Cuban-Americans.[33] Actually, Tampa became the first proving ground for what would later be called the "Cuban talent of enterprise." The cigar industry was born in the United States a dozen blocks from the downtown area in a small unincorporated community known as Ybor City. Two years later, Ybor City was annexed by the City of Tampa. On October 1885, the workers of the Sanchez y Haya Company rolled the first "Havana" cigar. A year later, the factory was producing 500,000 by hand per month. Jose Martí, the father of Cuban independence, came often to Tampa to raise money for the cause and to plot his strategy for Cuban independence. Tampa still manages to retain much of its original Cuban flavor.[34]

In chronological terms, Llanes identifies three major waves of Cuban immigration in the 1959 to 1980 period. The First Wave began in the aftermath of the Castro assumption of power on January 1, 1959 and ended at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. Approximately 280,000 Cubans entered the United States during this time period. Demographically, the First Wave tended to be rather homogeneous, i.e., predominantly white (94%), middle-aged (average 34 years old), well-educated (average 14 years of schooling). Politically, they identified readily with the conservative wing of the Republican Party. In many ways, they were economically productive for the United States. Being well-educated, sharing a strong work ethic, they were ready, able, and willing to compete in the private enterprise system. Some of these Cubans had even been

able to bring some capital assets with them to start a new life. Others had reliable networks of friends, family and/or business associates which facilitated their transition into United States society.[35]

Between the First and Second Waves, less than 3,000 Cubans entered the United States. The Second Wave began with a dramatic sea-lift operation from the Port of Camarioca in 1965 which later converted to an airlift called the "Freedom Flights" from Varadero ending in December 1973. An additional 273,000 Cubans entered the United States as part of the Second Wave.[36] This wave was more heterogeneous than the First Wave, although whites still constituted the majority (76%) the remaining 24% was made up of blacks, mulattos, and Asians. In addition to the well-educated, there were also substantial numbers of tradesmen, carpenters, plumbers, masons, farmers, fishermen, etc. They brought few capital assets with them but they shared the same cultural values with the First Wave relative to the work ethic and the drive for economic self-sufficience. Also, the Second Wave brought more of the academic and intellectual communities. For example, the City of Miami gained over 18,000 lawyers, 2,500 doctors, 1,600 teachers, and 4,600 carpenters, masons, and bricklayers all willing to work for the minimum wage.[37]

Again between the Second and Third Waves, only a small number of Cubans entered the United States. The Third Wave began with the takeover of the Peruvian Embassy in Havana by more than 10,000 Cubans in April 1980 which culminated in the massive sea lift operation from the Port of Mariel delivering over 125,000 people to the United States by the time it ended in October 1980.[38]

The 125,000 Cubans that entered the United States augmented the Cuban-American population by approximately 16%. The United States Bureau of Census estimated that in March 1979 there was a total of 794,000 people who considered themselves to be of Cuban origin or descent.[39]

The available data on Mariel Cubans indicate that they are different in the following ways from earlier Cuban immigrants. They are more likely:

1) to have been in unskilled or manual labor jobs in Cuba and less likely to have been in white-collar or professional jobs than the earlier groups.[40] Based on data collected at the four major camps, i.e., Eglin, Chaffee, Indiantown Gap, and McCoy, the Mariel Cubans were concentrated in craft (25.3%), labor (18.8%), machine operative (15.4%), and transport operative (11.0%) jobs. These occupations reflect the Mariel Cubans' origin in the larger cities where factory service, and construction jobs prevail. Very few of the Mariel Cubans were farm laborers (2.0%) or farmers (1.4%). Many of the farm laborers were sugar cane cutters. The number of professional and technical workers was higher than what might have been expected given the negative publicity. Over 9% of the Mariel Cubans confined to the camps reported that type of employment.[41]

2) to be single than earlier immigrants. The Mariel Cubans report 33% single persons versus 15% for the previous groups up to 1971.[42] Also, the Mariel Cubans show a higher divorce rate of 10.7% against only 5% for earlier Cubans.[43]

3) to be predominately male. The percentage of males among the Mariel Cubans was 70.2% versus 42.1% among the Varadero-Miami Freedom Flights.[44]

4) to be within a more narrow age range. A smaller portion of the Mariel Cubans were under 18 years of age (20.1%), which contrasted with the 33.5% for the airlift arrivals. However, the median age of the Mariel Cubans tended to be younger with a full 68.5% below 36 years of age.[45]

5) to be black or mulatto. Although blacks and mulattos make up about 27.2% of the population of Cuba in 1953.[46] The earlier Cuban immigrants were predominantly white (95%). The Mariel Cubans were from 60% to 80% white.[47] The discrepancies probably result from the attempts to classify the mulattos,

i.e., racial mixed. Undoubtedly, many of the lighter mulattos will attempt to pass for white in the United States.[48] Race like beauty tends to be in the eye of the beholder.

The average level of schooling of the Mariel Cubans based on a survey taken in Miami was 9 years which compares closely to the level of schooling of the Second Wave immigrants. As would be expected, only about 2% to 5% of the Mariel Cubans could communicate in English upon arrival.[49] These were probably descendants of the West Indians who settled in Cuba early in the twentieth century.

The fact that a substantial number of the Mariel Cubans were black or mulatto indicates, on the one hand, a closer approximation to the racial composition of the source population and, on the other, a significant new contribution to the Cuban-American community. To what extent has this new racial component influenced the unprecedented negative portrayal of Cuban immigrants is a question that few have dared to ask, let alone answer.[50]

IV. Afro-Cubans

Fernando Ortiz described Cuban society as a counterpoint, i.e., bipolar, where one half is white, refined and sweet like sugar, and the other half is dark, raw and pungent like tobacco. Ortiz continued his analogy by recognizing that the tobacco is dark, ranging from black to mulatto, sugar is light ranging from mulatto to white. Tobacco does not change its color; it is born dark and dies of its race. Sugar, on the other hand, changes its coloring, it is born brown and whitens itself; at first it is a syrupy mulatto and in this state pleases the common taste; then it is bleached and refined until it can pass for white, travel all over the world, reach all mouths, snd bring a better price, climbing to the top of the social ladder.[51]

In 1953, the official census estimated the combined black and mulatto population to be 27.2% of the total. The black and mulatto share of the Cuban had decreased from 32.1% back in 1899. Around the turn of the century, especially after Cuban independence in 1902, the various Cuban governments encouraged white immigration to offset the large numbers of blacks and mulattos. By 1907, the black and mulatto share had been reduced to 29.7%. The census of 1919 and 1931 the blacks and mulattos remained at 27.2% probably due, in part, to the importation of West Indian and Haitian sugar cane cutters. By 1943, the black and mulatto reduced again to 25.6% probably reflecting the forced repatriation of large numbers of West Indians and Haitians who attempted to remain in Cuba. By 1953, as mentioned above, the figure for blacks and mulattos had reached the 1919 and 1931 former levels of 27.2%.[52] Racial statistics since the 1953 census have been extremely difficult to obtain.[53]

While many prominent white Cubans dispute the existence of racial discrimination in pre-1959 Cuba, Thomas states that there was sometime of racial discrimination in Cuba although less pervasive and less virulent than in the United States by comparison.[54] After the abortive race war of 1912, where an estimated 3,000 blacks lost their lives,[55] blacks and mulattos rarely enjoyed the prominence in national affairs that they had enjoyed since 1902. Although at the local level, black and mulatto politicians achieved some measures of success. For example, Justo Salas, a black, was elected as mayor of Santiago, Cuba's second city, during the 1940's. Blacks also achieved leadership in the labor union movement. As in the United States, blacks and mulattoes excelled in sports, entertainment and the arts. Blacks were also well represented in Batista's army and police force.[56]

Batista himself provides an interesting view into race relations in pre-1959 Cuba. Although the official records of his birth and ancestry are

shroudded in mystery, he was generally believe to have been a mulatto with perhaps, some Chinese ancestry.[57] He rose from very humble beginning to become the strongman of Cuba roughly from 1933 to 1958. According to Montaner, one of Batista's greatest ambitions was to be accepted socially by the Island's upper-classes. This ambition, notwithstanding the adage that money whitens, was never realized. Racial prejudices run deep in Cuba, although carefully camouflaged on the surface. In the upper circles, it was better to be a thief than black. In his youth, Batista, was known as "mulato lindo" (pretty-boy mulatto). When he assumed power, he was known as "el indio" (the Indian) as a euphemism alluding to his mixed racial ancestry. However, his detractors simply referred to him, in private, as "ese negro" (that Negro). It should be recognized that no small part of the opposition to Batista in Cuba had racial overtones. A common expression of the time referred to the need to get rid of "ese negro" at all costs, come what may. But Batista was no champion for blacks and mulattos in Cuba, he dreamed, in vain, of being admitted to the inner sanctum of the Cuban high classes.[58]

Aquirre notes that blacks (i.e., blacks and mulattoes) constituted 25.9%[59] in 1943, and accounted for more than 30% of the musicians, artists, bricklayers, dressmakers, carpenters, decorators, tinsmiths, cigarmakers, shoemakers, stevedores, painters, bakers, and cooks. Eighteen percent of all primary school teachers in Cuba in 1943 were Afro-Cubans. Blacks had also achieved parity in such skilled occupations such as boilermakers, jewelers, bookkeepers, typists, stenographers, radio mechanics, watch repairmen and auto mechanics.[60] Nelson observed that in none of the broad occupational groups do blacks fall markedly low which he accepts as evidence that there was no rigid color line in Cuba as far as the major occupations were concerned.[61] Entralgo perceptively noted, however, that blacks tended to be concentrated on the lower rungs of the

socio-economic ladder.[62] For example, in the cigar industry rolled cigars and removed the tobacco stems, but whites classified the tobacco and finished the cigars.[63]

There is ample evidence to support the existence of certain patterns of institutionalized racial discrimination in Cuba. In general, blacks and mulattoes were under-represented in the political system, civil service, the professions, banking and finance. Also blacks and mulattoes suffered chronic unemployment and underemployment to a greater extent than whites in the post-World War II period in Cuba. Blacks and mulattoes tended to earn less than whites, even in the same occupations. The exception was, of course, in agriculture where the influence of color on earnings appeared to have been negligible.[64] The incidence of racial discrimination also tended to vary by provinces, e.g., strongest in Camaguey and weakest in the neighboring Oriente.[65] It is also interesting to note that with the exceptions of the Race War of 1912 and the racial outbreak in Trinidad (Cuba) in 1934, there were few recorded instances of violent racial confrontation in Cuba.[66] Although Aguirre recognizes the existence of racial discrimination in Cuba, he denies that it was a racially divided camp wherein blacks were mercilessly exploited.[67] Cubans, by temperament, are less rigid and formal in their institutional arrangements than, say, Americans.[68] Therefore, the color line was not always observed. In addition to the areas of sports, entertainment and the arts, blacks and whites also mingled rather freely in the worlds of prostitution, crime, drugs, gambling and superstition. The more social activities tended to be rather strictly segregated. Throughout the Island, there were social and religious clubs organized along strict racial lines, e.g., for white only, for mulatto only and for black only. The relationships, as recorded by many popular sayings, between blacks and mulattoes were ambivalent, often within the same families. Interracial marriages, where they

occurred, tended to be white men with non-white women more often than vice versa.[69] Masferrer and Mesa-Lago found evidence to suggest that blacks and mulattoes were gradually being integrated in the mainstream of Cuban society.[70]

The fact that the overwhelming majority (over 90%) of Cubans in the United States classify themselves as white suggests that the Cuban immigration to the United States has been racially selective given the approximately 30% of blacks and mulattoes living in Cuba.[71] Aguirre found it paradoxial that as immigration increased in Cuba, black Cubans participated far less than the relative share of the general Cuban population.[72] Furthermore, Aquirre does not believe that the tendency of black Cubans to remain in Cuba to be a function of the pre-1959 "castelike system" of occupational discrimination and segregation that had isolated them from full participation in Cuba society. Aguirre identifies three major factors which taken collectively discriminated against black Cuban immigration to the United States.[73]

Firstly, Aguirre calls attention to the importance of the extended family networks, capital assets, personal and business of the upper class Cuban, which by definition excluded blacks, were among the first to feel threatened by the Revolution and had the means to immigrate in the First Wave. Secondly, the immigration policy of the United States gave priority to the relatives of the Cubans already living in the United States which further discriminated against blacks.[74] Llanes also reports that visa waivers were being issued by the United States Embassy to all Cubans who had relatives in the United States.[75] Thirdly, the ideological climate created by the Revolution[76] relative to the removal of the last vestiges of racial discrimination.[77] There are good indications that, at least, during the early years of the Revolution, there were a number of programs which benefited the lower socio-economic groups where most blacks were clustered this generating their support.[78] Kahl held that blacks for the first

time in Cuba, about one-third of the population, shared equally in the goods and services, and the civic respect of their society. Furthermore, blacks were fully integrated in the schools and on the job.[79] Over time, however, it would appear that the support of these groups has become tenuous. In exchange for the benefits of fuller participation in Cuba, the Revolution has exacted a high price of double loyalty from blacks.[80] A double standard was imposed by the Revolution whereas white Cubans need not be necessarily revolutionaries, if they are prudent, silent and obedient, they can literally hide under a rock and watch the Revolution go by. But, blacks, on the other hand, must pay the Revolution back in the most visible and strident manner possible for all the benefits that the Revolution has bestowed upon them. In Montaner's view this is a form of official racist policy. Blacks who dare attempt to emigrate suffer all manner of humiliations and racial slurs, as traitors to the Revolution and as traitors to their race.[81] A black Cuban once observed in the mid 1960's that before the Revolution he only remembered that he was black when he bathed, now during the Revolution they remind him of his race every day.[82] Another black expressed that they (the Revolution) needed him in Angola because of his race.[83] Although, blacks made up a third of the Cuban population they substantially under-represented (only 7%) in the ranks of ruling elite.[84] Juan Almeida Bosque is the only black Army officer of any importance in Cuba[85] and spends some of his time composing popular music.[86] Based on the above discussion it appears that the combination of social class, United States immigration policy and revolutionary ideological collectively discriminated against black Cuban immigration.

V. White and Black Cubans in the United States

Generally, there is agreement among cubanologists that the recent influx of the Cubans via the Port of Mariel will alter the racial composition of

Cuban-Americans given the higher proportion of blacks, i.e., 20-40%, among them.[87] Further research will be indicate to trace the socio-economic adaptation of these newly arrived black Cubans to life in the United States.

Geographically, in 1970, white Cubans prefer (52.3%) to live in the South primarily in Dade County, Florida. Whereas, black Cubans (58.5%) prefer to live in the Northeast, primarily in the New York, New Jersey bistate area. Over time, there appears to be a secondary migration of white Cubans south, black Cubans north further segregating black and white Cubans.[88] As late of 1970, discrimination against black Cubans in Miami was surprisingly strongest in the predominately Cuban areas as compared to the white, black and/or racially mixed areas. At that time, Miami's Little Havana area was almost lily-white with only a negligible 0.8% black population. Whereas about the same time, black Cubans felt more accepted in the large Cuban-American community in New Jersey. It was also observed that the New Jersey black Cubans tended to americanize more slowly than similarly situated white Cubans.[90]

Ethnicity in the American context is a new and difficult concept for Cuban-Americans.[91] "Etnia" in Cuba is a euphemism for "social race." Social race refers to categories that are socially defined, although the terms by which they are labeled may have originally referred to the phenotypical characteristics, e.g., black, white, Indian or mulatto, do not have genetic meaning in most Latin American societies, more over the criteria for defining social races differ from region to region in Latin America. For example, in one region, social ancestry may be stressed; in another region, socio-economic criteria are emphasized; and still other regions, physical appearance becomes the primary basis for classifying people according to social race.[92] Apparently, the social race in Cuba was determined more on ancestry than on socio-economic status and physical appearances. Using Batista as an example, being a light-skinned mulatto he

may very well have been classified as white. It is believed that at that time, he was one of the richest man in the world.[93] The rejection of Batista, therefore, seemed due to his racial ancestry. Since the Cuban-American middle-class is 92% white and is generally able to identify and align itself with the dominant cultural groups in the United States. They tend to view an ethnic group status as a reduction in their current status and self-esteem by lumping themselves in the same category of the non-white racial and ethnic groups. Llanes remembers that it used to be said that certain immigrants can "pass" and in fact, do. They do not suffer from patterns of restrictive housing, school segregation, nor job discrimination. These Cuban-Americans feel that they are able to do as they please and to live the life they most desire for themselves and their children. They share many of the cultural values of the host culture and acquire new ones every day. Apparently, they are willing to ignore the obvious prejudices they find deeply rooted in American society and are less willing to fight for equality than to recognize the inherent inequality thrust upon the immigrant groups as natural.[94] In Dade County, Florida, for example, where 80% of the Hispanics are Cuban Americans, 15% of all marriages were between Spanish-surnamed whites and non-Spanish-surnamed white, 8% between Spanish-surnamed blacks and non-Spanish surnamed blacks, and only 4% between Spanish-surnamed whites and Spanish surnamed blacks.[95] These data indicate that Cuban-Americans are nearly four times more likely to marry non-Spanish-surnamed whites than Spanish-surnamed blacks.

Much has been written and said about the success of Cuban-Americans in the arena of free enterprise. During the early days of the First Wave, national magazines, The New York Times, and the broadcast media featured the "rags-to-riches" stories of Cubans who had arrived on the shores of the United States penniless and, in a few years later, had risen to positions of power in American

society. This type of story quickly circulated among Cubans themselves and labeled as "the Cuban success story," or "the Cuban miracle" until it became a widely accepted myth. Proponents of this myth, are quick to point to the twenty bank presidents, 220 bank vice presidents and some 19,000 businesses run by Cuban-Americans as living proof.[96] Llanes, notes that although it is a myth, there is one good thing about it in that it motivates a substantial number of Cuban-Americans to try to emulate it and thus move up the socio-economic status ladder to success.[97] However, Diaz reports that Cubans no longer respond to this to the myth of a "golden exile." As a group, they have made a fast adjustment to American society. Yet even as many Cubans achieved success in their new life in this country, others experienced social and economic difficulties and problems characteristic of other immigrants.[98]

In Miami, Cuban-Americans live or attempt to relive in "La Cuba de Ayer" (the pre-1959 Cuba). "La Cuba de Ayer" is a mythical country that they have fabricated, where nostalgia and myths abound. Llanes carefully notes that in "Little Havana nostalgia turns to nightmare as it mixes with American Kitsh."[99]

Aguirre observes that white Cubans in the United States created the myth that all black Cubans were solidly with the Revolution because, in their view, the Revolution had catered to them. They accuse Castro of "creating" the race problem in Cuba.[100] To the extent that this myth is held by white Cubans will reflect on their acceptance of the newly arrived black Cubans in their midst.

VI. A Cuban-American Counterpoint?

It is an open question of whether the Cuban counterpoint of which Ortiz observed above will reappear in the Cuban-American community.

The expectations are the Cuban-American middle-class will continue to assimilate until their hair is blonde, their eyes blue or green, and their names,

Jones, Smith, Rivers, Rodgers. They will lose more of their culture than other groups; and the Spanish language will be retained only by those who see it as a business or political necessity. Cuban traditions and customs will be only objects of passing curiosity and occasional cocktail party small talk. These people will be total radicals to the right of William Buckley, not as bright and cheery. Or they may even be apolitical, having discovered that politics is bad for business. Relations with Cuba will affect them only to the extent that a change in policy towards Cuba might do harm to their business interests in Miami and elsewhere.[101]

On the other side of the counterpoint, Llanes notes that there will be the poor, the dark-skinned, the high school dropouts. Theirs is not going to be an easy lot. They will continue to be marginal and consequently will continue to polarize.[102] In a very real sense, according to Aguirre, the immigration of black Cubans means a loss of national identity. Black Cuban can harbor few, if any, illusions of belonging to a nation in exile, patiently marking time until a triumphal return to Cuba. Therefore, it was not surprising that in 1970, 40.1% black Cubans had become United States citizens as compared to 23.8% for white Cubans.[104] Llanes believes that black Cubans will find a "degree of resonance" with the North American black cultural group.[104] There appears to exist some ambivalence in the relationships between black Americans and black Cubans in particular (and black Hispanics in general).[105] Wilson shares some very personal experiences with black Americans in this context.[106] Bryce-Laporte correctly states the double invisibility or double minority status of foreign born blacks in the United States and the ambivalence which follows.[107] Because people that are black is no more a call to unity per se, than that found among white people. A recent study reports that immigrants who stay in clusters with well developed basic support systems tend to adjust better to

life in a new environment than those who are dispersed into the general population.[108] An immediate problem for the newly arrived (1980) black Cubans is in which community, i.e., black-American or Cuban-American, do they belong? Having the credentials for membership in both, will they be accepted in either, both or none? If they are rejected by both the black-American and the Cuban-American communities will they develop their own marginal and polarized sub-community?

The Cuban-Haitian Employment Project in New York City conducted a survey of 6,198 program enrollees, 91% of whom identifies themselves as black or mulatto. This survey may provide some information relative to a particular set of black Cubans in New York City. Unfortunately, the report is not dated. Eighty-nine percent of the sample are males. Although only 11% are married, a substantial number, not determined, have established "common low" relationships. The arrival of larger numbers of single males (33% vs. 15% in prior waves) has given, at this point purely anecdotal, evidence at a relatively underinvestigated adaptation strategy on the part of Mariel Cubans. This informal coupling into a variety of common low arrangements favors the over-represented females from the previous immigrations. As was seen above, Cubans tend generally to marry within their ethnic and racial groups. These females tend to be older than the men, and given their longer stay in the United States tend to be well established with respect to career, income and property. Consequently, they (the Cuban women) may be willing to provide the basic support system to facilitate the Mariel Cuban's adjustment to life in the United States. This area is certainly worthy of greater study.[109]

Over half of the sample (57%) spent five months or less in the camps. Thirty-one percent spent six to nine months in the camps, 11% ten to twelve months and 0.093% remained 13 months or more in the camps. The experiences in

the camps proved to be very frustrating, even traumatic, for many people who had arrived in the United States expecting to find an "open arms" welcome and a relative smooth transition into a higher American standard of living.[110] The percentage of blacks in the Fort Indiantown Gap camp rose from 14% on May 30, 1980 to 50% as of the end of August 1980, indicating sponsors for black Cubans were not easy to find.[111]

Sponsorship was a very imperfect end product of a very complicated long process that often involved a "leap of faith" on the part of the voluntary agency which sought to match sponsor with Cuban.[112] Ninety-seven of the survey group reported that they had been sponsored by family or friends and 2% was sponsored by direct voluntary agency sponsorship. It is interesting to note in passing that many of the Mariel Cubans were rejected by their own families apparently not because they were dangerous but more because they tended to remind the families of recent deprivations and also threatened their family sponsors with the loss of painfully acquired status.[113] Surprisingly, the homosexuals proved to be among the easiest groups to sponsor because they exhibited few mental problems. Homosexual organizations from all over the United States immediately offered their assistance.[114] Some of the brighter boxing prospects were sponsored by boxing managers.[115] Other sponsors sought cheap labor from those willing to work for extremely low wages in exchange for release from the camps.[116] There were even reports of young women being sponsored so that they could be recruited as prostitutes.[117]

At the time of the survey, 47% of the sample had resided in New York for nine months or less and 45% had lived in New York for thirteen months or more. A full 34% of the sample were part of the secondary migration. By secondary migration, it is understood to refer to those who originally settled elsewhere before moving to New York City. The secondary migration is an important issue

worthy of greater study. It is reasonable to expect the Mariel Cubans to attempt to sort themselves out geographically or did the previous Cuban immigrations as they seek the best location. New York expected a substantial new influx from secondary migration when the state of Florida, where originally 80% of the 125,000 Mariel Cubans settled, announced the termination of welfare benefits for single men. There were reports of the welfare officials steering the Mariel Cubans to the areas where they might qualify for welfare.[118] Also the effects of colder weather can motivate Mariel Cubans to seek the warmer climes and the Cuban ambience of Miami.

Fifty-six of the sample reported Bronx as their place of residence, 43% gave Manhattan. The remaining one percent live in either Brooklyn or Queens. The geographical location is based on the available of low cost housing.

Educationally, 79% of the sample had received elementary schooling, 18% had completed secondary education, and 2% had some type of vocation training. In spite of the Revolution's claims for improving educational opportunities, 5% of the group was illiterate. Based on the limited education, this group is considered not job ready. Not only are they ill-prepared for white collar positions, they do not possess the basic skills required for many blue-collar jobs.

With regards to English proficiency, a necessary key for entry into the mainstream of American life. Of those for whom there were data, 10% possess beginner level English, 17% have "survival English," 20% have job-related English, and 12% have no English at all. There was no data available on the remaining 41% of the sample group. These data suggest that a vast majority of the group remain monolingual and have not taken advantage of the English as Second Language programs that have been available to them. While it is true that there are many jobs in both New York and Miami where a knowledge of

English is not required. But those who choose to remain monolingual in Spanish run the risk of being left on the margins of society.[119]

Ninety percent of the sample received some kind of medical treatment in Cuba, and 20% were receiving medical care in the United States at the time of the survey. Twenty-five suffer from mental disorders, 19% from alcoholism, 15% use drugs, and 14% are listed as catchall category of "other" disorders. Only 22% is listed as being in good health.

Upon arrival 89% was receiving public assistance as opposed 16% at the time of the survey. Ten percent reported that they were self-sufficient and 53% reported alternative sources of income.

With regards to employment, 6% of the sample was without regular employment in Cuba. One percent lacked any work history at all. Twenty-one percent had some work history in the United States. Thirty-seven percent had a combined work history of less than six months in Cuba and/or the United States. Seventy-nine percent are unskilled, 35% are in need of vocational assessment due to their unrealistic career goals, and 20% had an employable skill or trade. In Cuba, many had been employed as common laborer, construction workers, and sugarcane cutters. Compared to the prior waves of Cubans who came to the United States, this group is poorer, less educated and less job ready.[120] Apparently, a number of these Cubans who thought they could simply live off the fat of the land are experiencing severe difficulties in adapting themselves to life in the United States.[121] Over twenty years of life in a paternalistic communist society has not prepared them for life in a competitive free enterprise system.[122] In Cuba, when seeking work, provided one was not an undesirable, all one had to do is to go to a government office and they would place one on a job.[123] Undoubtedly, the racial and ethnic prejudices have made their search for jobs even more difficult probably causing disappointment, frustration and, perhaps, alienation on the part of many.[124]

There is no way of telling how representative this sample is of the entire group of Mariel Cubans living in the New York City area. An early estimate place some 10,000 Mariel Cubans in the New York - New Jersey bi-state area.[125] But the unknown magnitude and the directions of the so-called secondary migrations makes any estimate of their current numbers in the general area hazardous at best. But for the sample group at hand of 6,198 individuals, in itself, represents a sizeable sample about which to pose some very tentative conclusions.[126]

This group is predominately non-white (91%), male (89%), single (89%), spent five months as less in the camps (57%), has lived in New York for nine months or less (47%), live in the Bronx (56%) and Manhattan (43%), has basically elementary education (79%) with 5% illiterate, low in English proficiency, experiencing health problems (78%), have alternative sources of income, not specified (53%), and unemployed with no readily marketable job skills (71%). Taken together, all of those factors make this group extremely difficult to place on jobs. More difficult when we consider racial prejudice and an already high double digit unemployment rate. Without assistance, this group of predominately black Cubans can easily remain on the margins of society and may slip into the deep and dark underworld of crime and wanton violence upon the society that seems to reject them.

FOOTNOTES

1. _____, Hispanics and Jobs: Barriers to Progress, (National Commission for Employment Policy: Washington, D.C.), Report No. 14, September, 1982, pp. 2-3.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

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6. Heriberto Dixon, "Who Ever Heard of a Black Cuban", Afro-Hispanic Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, September, 1982, p. 10.

7. As an example, see: Francisco Solano, "Las Indias en el siglo XVII", Historia 16, Extra XIX, p. 118.

8. _____, Hispanics and Jobs: Barriers to Progress, op. cit. p. 16.

9. Ibid., p. 3.

10. Carlos Guillermo Wilson (Cubana), Afro-Hispanics: A Challenge for Multi-Cultural Education, (Unpublished paper, no date), p. 2.

11. Ibid., p. 1.

12. Heriberto Dixon, op. cit. p. 11.

13. Martha Cobb, "Afro-Arabs, Blackamoors, and Blacks," Black World, February, 1972, pp. 32-40, cited in Carlos Guillermo Wilson, op. cit. p. 3.

14. Miriam Decosta, "Historical and Literary Views of Jusuf, African Conqueror of Spain", The Journal of Negro History, October, 1975, Vol. LX, No. 4, pp. 480-490, cited in Carlos Guillermo Wilson, op. cit. p. 3.

15. Carlos Guillermo Wilson, op. cit. p. 3.

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20. Richard Price (comp), Sociedades Cimarronas, (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno XII, 1981), original title: Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas, (1973), p. 11.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. The life and times of Ventura Sanchez (Cobu) has been fictionalized in Cesar Leante, Capitan de Cimarrones (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, S.A., 1982), and also a prior edition under the title of: los guerrilleros negros (Mexico: Siglo Veintiuno XXI, primera edicion, 1974).

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25. See: Cubana (Carlos Guillermo Wilson) Chombo, (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1981) and Lancelot S. Lewis, The West Indian in Panama: Black Labor in Panama, 1850-1914, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980), cited in Carlos Guillermo Wilson, op. cit. p. 4.

26. See: Hubert Howe Bancroft., History of California, 1542-1800, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), Vol. XVII, pp. 333-352 also: William M. Mason, "L.A.'s Founders Should Be Honored For What They Were: A Racial Mix", Los Angeles Times, September 4, 1975, cited in Carlos Guillermo Wilson, op. cit. p. 5.

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50. Robert L. Bach, et al, p. 33.

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96. Ibid., pp. 47 and 51.

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99. Jose Llanes, op. cit. p. 126.

100. Benigno Aguirre, op. cit. p. 114.

101. Jose Llanes, op. cit. p. 207.

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126. Special thanks to Manual Santana, Director of the Cuban-Haitian Employment Project in New York City for providing the sample survey data used in the above section.